United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Despite "some misgivings", the latest recommendations for enlarged mandate of United Nations Protection Force in Croatia must be accepted, Secretary-General notes in report to Security Council.

+ General Assembly today, in resumed forty-sixth session, considers who should occupy seat of former Yugoslavia.

+ Ministerial-level International Meeting on aid to victims of conflict in former Yugoslavia convened by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees today in Geneva.

+ Inspection team of Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament completes Agriculture Ministry search and leave Baghdad for Bahrain.

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Despite "some misgivings, in the light of the many other demands on the Organization's attention and resources", the latest recommendations by the Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) relating to the enlargement of the mandate of the Force in Croatia "on the balance must be accepted if the effort already invested by the Security Council in Croatia is not to be undermined as a result of UNPROFOR's mandate being limited to control of military movements only or as a result of the Force lacking the necessary staff resources", noted Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in a report dated 27 July addressed to the Security Council.

The Secretary-General reported that the Force Commander, Satish Nambiar, had requested that UNPROFOR be specifically given authority to control the entry of civilians into the United Nations protected areas (UNPAs) and that it should have powers to perform immigration and customs functions at the UNPA borders where these coincide with international frontiers. The Force Commander, said the Secretary-General, had also recommended an increase in the strength of UNPROFOR's civil affairs component.

These recommendations, said the Secretary-General, are drawing UNPROFOR "into quasi-governmental functions which go well beyond normal peace-keeping

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practice, have major resource implications and may stimulate demands for yet deeper United Nations involvement in this troubled region". He also informed the Council that preliminary estimates of the financial implications of these recommendationsa would be made available shortly.

If approved by the Security Council, these enlargements of the Force's mandate and strength would come on top of two previous enlargements in connection with Sarajevo airport and the "Pink Zones", contained in Security Council resolutions 758 (1992) and 762 (1992), respectively. In addition, there is the possibility that UNPROFOR will be asked to establish a military presence on the Prevlaka Peninsula "to ensure that it remains demilitarized".

The Secretary-General's report was submitted to the Council in accordance with resolution 762 (1992) of 30 June 1992. Its purpose is to inform the Council of progress made by the UNPROFOR in implementing the mandate entrusted to it in Croatia under the United Nations peace-keeping plan.

In a separate development, the Permanent Representative of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Muhamad Sacirbey, today told correspondents at Headquarters that many of the basic provisions of resolution 758 remained unimplemented. The shelling continued despite international supervision, and "the extremists" were able to arm themselves in Serbia and Montenegro through their own channels. In his opinion, the current arms embargo did not help improve the situation. "No one is coming to aid to fight off the agression; at the same time, we are being prevented from defending ourselves", he concluded.

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At the resumed forty-sixth session of the General Assembly today, the question of who should assume the United Nations membership held by former Yugoslavia was addressed by representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia, all of whom took the position that Serbia and Montenegro had no automatic right to the seat and should have to apply for membership. The representative of the former Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) argued for its retention of the seat.

The Assembly also referred two agenda items to the Fifth Committee for consideration - one dealing with the United Nations common system, the other with funding for the United Nations Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM).

On Friday, the session will resume to consider the report of the Fifth Committee on those issues, and to deal with Georgia's application for membership of the Organization.

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A ministerial-level International Meeting on aid to the victims of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, convened by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), took place today at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, gave the opening address.

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Tomorrow, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee will meet in Geneva to review the response of the United Nations system to the emergency situation, and the relief needs of the affected population of the former Yugoslavia. The meeting, chaired by Jan Eliasson, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, will attempt to broaden the base of participation of the agencies of the United Nations system, of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and of the non-governmental organizations.

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The team conducting an inspection of the Ministry of Agriculture in Baghdad, and the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament, Rolf Ekeus, who was visiting the Iraqi capital, left for Bahrain today, a spokesman for the Special Commission, Nikita Smidovitch, told the press at Headquarters today. The inspectors were expected to assess their findings and present a report on the inspection to the Executive Chairman. He said too that Mr. Ekeus had met this morning with the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.

The spokesman said that no material or documents were removed from the building by the inspection team, other than their own notes. Politically, he said, the inspection was deemed a success because "we ascertained our right to inspect any place or building that we designate for inspection".

He said that there was some evidence that certain material had been removed and there had been some refurnishing of the building, but its significance would have to be considered and assessed by the whole inspection team.

The inspection of the Agriculture Ministry building followed an agreement on modalities reached at the weekend between the Executive Chairman of the Commission and the Iraqi authorities. The agreement came after Iraq had refused for 20 days to allow the inspection team to search the building for materials they believed it contained relating to the country's proscribed ballistic missile programme. The inspectors had maintained a round-the-clock vigil outside the building in an attempt to prevent the relevant material from being removed. They were withdrawn late last week in the face of escalating threats to their security and the failure by the Iraqi authorities to ensure their safety.

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